

PURPOSE OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNIT PROGRAM

The Seminole County Board of County Commissioners' Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) Program provides property owners in unincorporated areas with an opportunity to acquire essential improvements.

Chapter 125.01(q)1 of the Florida Statutes authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to provide for the establishment, merging, or abolishment of MSBUs for any part or all of the unincorporated area of the County. Chapter 197.3632 of the Florida Statutes provides for the levy, collection and enforcement of non-ad valorem assessments through the uniform method. Non-ad valorem assessments are not based on millage but on the cost to provide the improvements and corresponding benefit to the assessed property.

In 1989, the MSBU Program Guidelines and Procedures for creating MSBU districts were approved by the Board of County Commission. Under the MSBU Program, four main categories for MSBU districts are sanctioned: Aquatic Weed Control, Construction, Solid Waste Collection & Disposal, and Residential Street Lighting.

Communities may apply and petition to establish new MSBU districts for essential improvements related to health or safety, such as; road paving and drainage, water and/or sewer service, sidewalks, aquatic weed control, neighborhood perimeter wall reconstruction, and residential street lighting.

Funding and financing for an MSBU district project is arranged through the County, and repayment for the project cost is collected through the district property owners' annual tax bills in the form of an annual non-ad valorem assessment. The method of assessment varies for each type of MSBU, such as; per lot, per homesite, per front foot, per acre, etcetera. Repayment terms may vary from one year to ten years. Assessments related to construction district are collected annually until the statutory lien is satisfied. Assessments for other district types are often continuous.

The first MSBU program was established in 1972, initiating a Street Lighting District for the English Estates subdivision. The Street Lighting Program will have 364 districts for FY03/04 and will receive applications for approximately 7-10 new districts and 20-25 district upgrades each year.

A Solid Waste Collection and Disposal MSBU was established May 10, 1994 and includes all residential property in unincorporated Seminole County. The Solid Waste Collection and Disposal MSBU includes over 65,000 assessed customers.

Other active MSBU districts currently encompass eight projects including two road paving and drainage projects, three water service projects, two aquatic weed control projects, and one maintenance project. The creation of a Walls MSBU District is projected for FY03/04.